

# Riparian Vegetation Management Task Force

## Work Groups

### **Task Force Goals, Objectives and Reports Work Group**

LB 701 states the task force shall develop and prioritize vegetation management goals and objectives, analyze the cost effectiveness of available vegetative treatment, and develop plans and policies to achieve such goals and objectives. It further states that the task force shall make preliminary recommendations to the Governor and legislature by December 15, 2007, and 2008, with a final report prior to June 30, 2009.

#### **Actions –**

1. Develop recommendations on vegetation management goals, objectives, and priorities.
2. Recommend the content of preliminary recommendations and final report to the Governor and Legislature.
3. Provide guidance on preparation of the preliminary recommendations and final report utilizing the inputs of the other work groups and the task force.
4. Develop recommendations for definitions of terminology associated with vegetation management efforts.

**Members –** Senator Tom Carlson, Chairman, Task Force Member – Senator Deb Fischer, Task Force Member – Jason Alexander, Department of Natural Resources – Russ Shultz, Task Force Member – Mike Sarchet, Task Force Member – Dr. Scott Josiah, Task Force Member – Gloria Erickson, Task Force Member

### **Vegetative Management and Treatment Work Group**

This work group should determine what vegetative management actions are needed to meet the vegetation management goals and objectives.

#### **Actions -**

1. Recommend proactive management and control strategies using the adaptive management approach that utilizes the best techniques currently available.
2. Estimated cost for initial and follow-up control, removal, and management.
3. Analyze cost effectiveness of control, removal, and management options.
4. Develop Templates and Protocols for Control, Revegetation and Rehabilitation, Monitoring and/or long-term Management, and Maintenance.

**Members –** Kent Aden, Chairman, Task Force Member - Mike Clements, Task Force Member – Rich Tesar, Task Force Member – Dr. Scott Josiah, Task Force Member – Milt Moravek, Central Platte NRD – Jason Alexander, Department of Natural Resources – T.J. Walker, Nebraska Game and Parks



## Survey and Monitoring Work Group

Identifying the extent and location of invasive plant problems is essential for effective planning. It is also important to monitor, document, and evaluate the control and management efforts. This is key in the use of an adaptive management approach.

### Actions –

1. Summarize past and current management and control efforts.
2. Evaluate past and current management and control efforts.
3. Identify the extent and location of invasive vegetation using available information.
4. Recommend a system for ongoing survey and monitoring of management and control efforts.

**Members – Rich Tesar, Chairman, Task Force Member – Mike Linder, Task Force Member – Charles Brooks, Task Force Member – John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD – Jason Alexander, Department of Natural Resources**



## Education and Awareness Work Group

Since almost all the riparian areas and streambeds are privately owned, riparian vegetation management is dependent upon aware and receptive landowners. A riparian vegetation management plan will not be accomplished without the awareness and commitment of the landowners and the public. It is critical that we have an aggressive education and awareness campaign about the importance of riparian areas and the increasing impacts of invasive plants on these areas. It is essential that the riparian landowners, the general public, and decision makers be aware of the need for riparian vegetation management and supports it. They need to be kept informed of task force activities and have a chance for input.

There are many invasive plant information and education activities by numerous groups, but there is no overall plan, campaign, or directed effort that identifies target audiences and desired end results utilizing all appropriate strategies, combines and coordinates efforts of all potential partners, or fully utilizes professional information and education specialists.

### Actions –

1. Provide recommendations on how to keep the public informed of task force activities and a framework for public input.
2. Review current invasive plant information and education activities.
3. Recommend a framework for a coordinated information and education campaign.

**Members – Mike Clements, Chairman, Task Force Member – Jim Miller, Task Force Member – Gloria Erickson, Task Force Member – Bob Bettger, Department of Natural Resources**

## **Funding and Incentive Program Work Group**

As indicated in the background information for the Streambed Ownership Work Group, the riparian owners own to the center of the stream in all rivers. Most of these owners are not taxed on the streambed and are not receiving any income from this land. There are other owners who are receiving some economic return or are receiving some beneficial use, such as recreational, hunting, or fishing, or it is being managed by public and private interests for the benefit of wildlife, endangered species, plant diversity, or natural areas. There is an increasing demand for purchasing stream beds for recreation, hunting, and fishing. While all owners (public and private) have responsibility to control state designated noxious weeds, it is difficult to obtain willing control efforts from some landowners. Incentive-based programs may become a tool to encourage landowner participation.

### **Actions –**

1. Determine what funding is needed to provide incentives, support, and assistance to accelerate control, removal, and management efforts where there are public benefits.
2. Determine the potential federal, state, and local sources of funding of incentive programs.
3. Determine funding needs noxious weed program assistance.
4. Make recommendations as to state and other funding needs.

**Members – Mike Arps, Chairman, Task Force Member – Gloria Erickson, Task Force Member – Bob Bettger, Department of Natural Resources**

## **Streambed Ownership Work Group**

The State of Nebraska State Surveyor Instruction 91-1, January 18, 1991, states: "The decisions of the Court in Nebraska have been quite clear and consistent that the riparian owners, own to the center of the stream in all rivers, without regard to navigability, in Nebraska. Court decisions alternately use the terms "centerline of the stream," "thread of the stream," "center of the channel," and "thalweg." These instructions provide guidance to the surveyor in dealing with these terms and using 'other more reliable and permanent methods to determine the limits of the ownership of the beds of rivers.'" Steve Cobb, Nebraska State Surveyor's Office stated that it would be helpful if state legislation was changed to provide a clear understanding of permanent boundaries in riparian areas.

Nebraska county assessors are to maintain cadastral data and maps for the purpose of assessing property. These data and maps are in different stages of currency in counties as it relates to riparian ownership. Many streambeds have been considered waste land and have not been taxed, and the ownership boundaries are not current or even identified. There is an increasing demand for purchasing streambeds. This requires that boundaries be determined so the land can be sold. As streambeds are determined to have value, they can be assessed and property taxes collected. Clearly identified streambed ownership is also important to determine responsibilities for controlling riparian noxious weeds, purple loosestrife, saltcedar, and phragmites.

### **Actions –**

1. Determine county current status of cadastral information on streambeds and any planned actions to make this information available.
2. Outline what is needed to make cadastral information available on all streambeds in the state.
3. Outline legislation needed to provide a clear understanding of permanent boundaries in streambeds.

**Members – Russ Shultz, Chairman, Task Force Member – Kent Aden, Task Force Member – Senator Cap Dierks, Task Force Member – Mike Arps, Task Force Member**



## **Vegetation Water Use Work Group**

There needs to be a better understanding of the water consumptive use by native plants and non-native plants in riparian areas.

### **Actions –**

1. Provide information to the Task Force on current information on native and non-native plant water consumptive use.
2. Determine what is needed to develop a better understanding of consumptive use of riparian vegetation.

**Members – Ann Bleed, Chairperson, Task Force Member – Senator Tom Carlson, Task Force Member – Dr. Gary Cunningham, Task Force Member – Kent Aden, Task Force Member – John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD – Jason Alexander, Department of Natural Resources**

The initial work group members would be those assigned by the agency, group, or organization, and any Task Force Members who wish to participate. Membership and representation should be flexible to allow for the best information and recommendations to the Task Force. Additional work groups could be established as needed. This document is subject to change as a result of Task Force input.